

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BELGRADE 2511

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (BLATNIK, JOHN A) PINT PFOR YO

SUBJ: VISIT OF FORMER CONGRESSMAN JOHN A. BLATNIK

REF : BELGRADE 2317

1. SUMMARY: FORMER CONGRESSMAN JOHN A. BLATNIK, HEAD OF AMERICAN DELEGATION TO YUGOSLAVIA'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY VICTORY CELEBRATION, MADE CALLS ON HIGH-LEVEL YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS IN BELGRADE AND IN CROATIA AND SLOVENIA. THE FOLLOWING REPORT WAS DRAWN PRIMARILY FROM ZAGREB'S REPORTS ON BLATNIK'S MEETINGS, WITH SUCH TOP PERSONALITIES AS BAKARIC, SETINC, AND OTHERS, IN ADDITION TO HIS OBSERVATIONS FROM CALL ON TITO. END SUMMARY.

2. OUR PRELIMINARY REPORT ON BLATNIK'S ATTENDANCE AT PARADE AND TITO'S RECEPTION WAS IN REFTTEL. BLATNIK HAS SINCE CONFIRMED REPORT THAT TITO TOOK THE SALUTE OF PASSING TROOPS SITTING ON A CHAIR PLACED ON A RAISED PLATFORM SO THAT VIEWER FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF STAND HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT TITO WAS STANDING WHEN IN FACT HE WAS NOT.

3. IN COMMENTING ON HIS AND GEN. BUCKINGHAM'S MEETING

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WITH TITO, BLATNIK SAID THE MEETING WAS VERY CORDIAL. TITO WAS

IN A WARM EXPANSIVE MOOD AND REMINISCED ABOUT WW II. WHEN BLATNIK REFERRED TO RECENT SOVIET STATEMENTS MINIMIZING THE ROLE OF THE PARTISANS DURING WWII, TITO DID NOT REACT IN WORDS - INSTEAD, HIS EYES TURNED A HARD, COLD BLUE AND BLATNIK COULD TELL THAT TITO STRONGLY RESENTED THE SOVIET STATEMENTS. BLATNIK HAD BEEN TOLD BEFORE THE MEETING THAT TITO'S BACK BOTHERED HIM A BIT, BUT HE SAW NO EVIDENCE OF THIS DURING THEIR ACTUAL ENCOUNTER. HE WAS AGAIN IMPRESSED BY THE MARSHALL'S VITALITY.

4. BLATNIK'S OTHER MAIN MEETING IN BELGRADE WAS WITH SUBNOR PRESIDENT KOSTA NADJ. THIS WAS LARGELY TAKEN UP WITH OLD WAR STORIES. BLATNIK DID RAISE THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INFORMAL VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA BY A GROUP OF AMERICAN PILOTS WHO WERE RESCUED BY THE PARTISANS. BLATNIK WILL WORK ON THE VISIT THROUGH THE VETERANS ORGANIZATION.

5. BLATNIK MET WITH PRESIDENCY MEMBER VLADIMIR BAKARIC FOR ONE HOUR ON MAY 13; BRANKO RAJIC, RETIRED COUNSELOR OF THE CROATIAN SECRETARIAT OF INFORMATION, AND CONSUL GENERAL KAISER WERE ALSO PRESENT. AFTER AN EXCHANGE OF WARTIME REMINISCENCES BAKARIC MADE THE FOLLOWING NOTEWORTHY COMMENTS:

A. THERE ARE NO OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS WITH THE U.S. OF COURSE, HE SAID, THERE WERE CERTAIN UNDERSTANDABLE DIFFERENCES ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, BUT BOTH GOVERNMENTS EXCHANGE VIEWS AND THE DIFFERENCES WERE NOT AFFECTING THE GOOD STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS.

B. YUGOSLAVIA IS A KEEN AND ACTIVE SUPPORTER OF DETENTE. IT KNOWS THAT ITS GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION MAKES IT STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN. IF DETENTE WERE TO COLLAPSE, YUGOSLAVIA WOULD EXPECT TO BE SUBJECTED TO HEAVY PRESSURES FROM BOTH SIDES.

C. THERE ARE "SOME ELEMENTS" IN THE SOVIET UNION WHO INTERPRET DETENTE TO MEAN THAT THE WORLD WOULD BE DIVIDED INTO SOVIET AND AMERICAN AREAS. THE YUGOSLAVS, HE SAID, HAVE TRIED TO DISPEL THE SOVIETS OF THIS NOTION OF DETENTE, BUT HAVE NOT BEEN COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL.

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D. BAKARIC THOUGHT YUGOSLAVIA WOULD HAVE "NO GREAT DIFFICULTY IN OVERCOMING ITS GREATEST PROBLEMS AFTER TITO'S DEATH." HE SAID TITO HAS SUCCEEDED IN LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR SOLUTIONS TO YUGOSLAVIA'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS. HE SIMILINGLY ADDED THAT YUGOSLAVS ARE MORE WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBLE EXTERNAL INTENTIONS AND ACTION AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA IN THE POST-TITO PERIOD THAN IT IS ABOUT ITS INTERNAL PROBLEMS.

E. BAKARIC SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE TWO SUPERPOWERS WERE CLOSELY WATCHING YUGOSLAVIA WITH AN EYE TO THE POST-TITO PERIOD. HE MENTIONED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD INDICATED TO A "GROUP" IN YUGOSLAVIA THAT IT CAN COUNT ON SUPPORT FROM THE USSR. WHEN HE IMPLIED THAT THE US MIGHT ALSO HAVE SOME SUCH CONTACT WITH A "GROUP" IN YUGOSLAVIA, KAISER DENIED THIS AND ADDED THAT THE US HAS OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS CONSISTENTLY FOLLOWED A POLICY SUPPORTING THE INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY OF YUGOSLAVIA. BAKARIC IMMEDIATELY RESPONDED THAT HE KNOWS THAT THE US SUPPORTS THE INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF YUGOSLAVIA AND THAT HE IS "NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE US."

F. AT BLATNIK'S INSTIGATION, BAKARIC COMMENTED BRIEFLY ABOUT ROMANIA. HE SAID THAT ROMANIA AND YUGOSLAVIA WERE FOLLOWING "DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED" INTERNAL POLICIES; IN CONTRAST TO YUGOSLAVIA, ROMANIA IS TIGHT, CENTRALIZED COUNTRY ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT SIGNS OF SOME LOOSENING IN ROMANIA. HE DESCRIBED ROMANIA AS "OPPORTUNISTIC, " BY IMPLICATION MAKING AN INVIDIOUS COMPARISON WITH YUGOSLAVIA. HE MENTIONED THAT ROMANIA HAD TRIED TO GET YUGOSLAVIA TO ALLY ITSELF WITH ROMANIA IN CERTAIN, UNSPECIFIED, "MISGUIDED" FOREIGN POLICY MOVES WHICH THE YUGOSLAVS HAD REJECTED. HE SAID ROMANIA HAD PREVIOUSLY FEARED THE INTERVENTION OF THE SOVIET UNION, BUT THERE ARE NO SUCH FEARS AT PRESENT. HE THEN ADDED THAT ROMANIA HAD AT ONE POINT ASKED THE US WHETHER IT WOULD SUPPORT ROMANIA IF IT ASSERTED ITSELF AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION; THE US SAID IT WOULD NOT DO SO.

G. BULGARIA IS COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON THE SOVIET UNION, BAKARIC SAID. THE MACEDONIAN PROBLEM IS STILL REAL IN BULGARIA (AS WELL AS IN GREECE); THE YUGOSLAVS, HOWEVER, HAVE SOLVED THE MACEDONIAN PROBLEM.

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6. CONSUL GENERAL KAISER THOUGHT BAKARIC LOOKED VERY GRAY; HE WAS NOTICEABLY PALE AND APPEARED FRAIL. HE HAS A BIG RAME, BUT IS THIN AND HIS NECK IS WATTLED. (BLATNIK, ON THE OTHER HAND, WHO HAD SEEN BAKARIC ABOUT 15 YEARS AGO, THOUGH BAKARIC LOOKED FITTER AND BETTER THAN THEN.) BAKARIC REFERRED TO HIS BEING ILL. IN FACT, UPON ENTERING HIS OFFICE ONE OF HIS AIDES WHISPERED TO KAISER THAT HE HOPED BLATNIK KNEW THAT BAKARIC HAS BEEN ILL. BAKARIC SPOKE IN A THIN, HIGH-PITCHED TONE; BLATNIK FOUND THAT BAKARIC'S VOICE HAD CHANGED.

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7. THE MEETING WITH CROATIAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL PRESIDENT JAKOV SIROTKOVIC WAS CORDIAL BUT GENERAL, TOUCHING BRIEFLY ON A WIDE VARIETY OF TOPICS. THERE WERE TV CAMERAS PRESENT FOR THE FIRST FEW MINUTES, AND COVERAGE LATER FOLLOWED IN MEDIA. BLATNIK TALKED BRIEFLY ABOUT HIS WARTIME EXPERIENCES IN CROATIA, OUTLINED HIS ROLE AS INTERMEDIARY FOR TRUMAN IN THE LATE 40'S AND EARLY 50'S, OBSERVED HOW MUCH THINGS HAVE IMPROVED IN YUGOSLAVIA AND EXPRESSED INTEREST IN HOW YUGOSLAVIA DEVELOPS FURTHER AND DEALS WITH CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS. SIROTKOVIC DESCRIBED THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION AS BASICALLY NOT BAD AND MENTIONED SEVERAL PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT SECTORS - FOOD, ENERGY, PETRO-CHEMICALS--DWELLING SOMEWHAT LONGER ON THE LATTER. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID THAT THE YUGOSLAV PIPELINE WOULD COST DOLS 800 MILLION; HE ALSO PUT THE VALUE OF THE DOW-INA PROPOSED JOINT VENTURE AT DOLS 1 BILLION (TWO STAGES OF DOLS 500 MILLION EACH.)

8. OTHER MEETINGS IN CROATIA: APART FROM SOME VISITS WITH PERSONS IN THE OIL INDUSTRY, OTHER CALLS IN ZAGREB INCLUDED THE CROATIAN SUBNOR (BLATNIK'S HOST) AND THE EMIGRANTS ORGANIZATION (MATICA ISELJENIKA HRVATSKE). CROATIAN SUBNOR PRESIDENT PER CAR GAVE A LUNCHEON FOR BLATNIK ATTENDED BY TWO OTHER SENIOR VETERANS INCLUDING STJEPAN JUREKOVIC, DIRECTOR OF THE ZAGREB PTT AND A

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SENIOR LOCAL PARTY FIGURE. BOTH CAR AND JUREKOVIC HAVE BEEN IN THE CROATIAN ASSEMBLY FOR YEARS AND TALK TOUCHED ON THE POLITICAL PROCESS WHILE CONCENTRATING MAINLY ON WARTIME REMINISCENCES. THE MOOD WAS WARM AND SENTIMENTAL. CAR ALSO MADE A STRONG IMPRESSION ON BLATNIK, ESPECIALLY WHEN TELLING A STORY WHERE 15,000 PEOPLE STOOD STRAIGHT LISTENING TO CAR'S PATRIOTIC SPEECH WHILE BULLETS, FIRED AS A HARASSMENT BY RUSSIAN TROOPS MASSED ACROSS THE BORDER, CRASHED IN THE TREE LIMBS ABOVE THEIR HEADS. BLATNIK GOT QUITE ELOQUENT AT THIS POINT SAYING THAT HE COULD NEVER PERSONALLY FORGIVE NOR UNDERSTAND STALIN'S TREAT-

MENT OF THE YUGOSLAVS. HIS AUDIENCE SEEMED TO SHARE HIS SENTIMENTS. BLATNIK WAS ALSO IMPRESSED BY CAR'S DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE YOUTH, WORKERS AND INTELLIGENTSIA OF ZAGREB DURING THE WAR; CAR CLAIMED THAT EVERY SEVENTH CITIZEN PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THE RESISTANCE.

9. ON VISIT TO THE KRSKO NUCLEAR POWERPROJECT, BLATNIK MET LOCAL OFFICIALS, DIRECTORS OF THE PROJECT AND WESTINGHOUSE REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING VICE PRESIDENT WEAVER AND VICE PRESIDENT WELLS. HE WAS TOLD THAT THE CONSTRUCTION WAS ABOUT SIX WEEKS BEHIND SCHEDULE, MAINLY BECAUSE OF THE DELAY IN RECEIVING THE BLUEPRINTS FROM THE AMERICAN ARCHITECTURAL FIRM (GILBERT). THE OTHER PROBLEM STRESSED BY MARIAN OSOLNIK AND OTHERS WAS THAT WESTINGHOUSE HAD NOT YET ADAPTED ITSELF TO WORKING IN A SOCIALISTIC ECONOMY AND SEEMED TO BE TRYING TO CONDUCT ITSELF AS THOUGH IT WERE OPERATING IN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE ECONOMIES. THE YUGOSLAVS SAID THAT ENTERPRISES IN YUGOSLAVIA NEED A LONGER LEAD TIME THAN FACTORIES IN THE WESTERN WORLD, BUT THAT WESTINGHOUSE OUGHT TO LOOK AT THIS INITIAL VENTURE HERE AS JUST A BEGINNER. TO THE EXTENT THAT A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP IS DEVELOPED BETWEEN WESTINGHOUSE AND YUGOSLAV ENTERPRISES, THIS EXPERIENCE WOULD BE TURNED TO GOOD ADVANTAGE IN FUTURE NUCLEAR PROJECTS IN YUGOSLAVIA AND POSSIBLY FOR COOPERATIVE EFFORTS ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD. BLATNIK LATER PAID VISIT TO NOVO MESTO, WHERE HE MET LOCAL OFFICIALS AND TOURED A NEW FACTORY.

10. ON MAY 15 IN LJUBLJANA, HE CALLED ON THE REPUBLICAN
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COMMITTEE ON WAR VETERAN'S ASSOCIATION; GENERAL LAH, PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION AND OTHERS WERE PRESENT; TOURED THE MUSEUM OF THE REVOLUTION WHICH HAD WARTIME PHOTOGRAPHS WHICH INCLUDED BLATNIK; VISITED THE IMMIGRANTS ASSOCIATION WHERE HE WAS GREETED BY, AMONG OTHERS, PRESIDENT DRAGO SELIGER; ATTENDED A LUNCH HOSTED BY PRESIDENT MARINC WHICH INCLUDED ON THE

YUGOSLAV SIDE THE SECRETARY OF THE LCS SETINC, VICE PRESIDENT
DRAGAN, GENERAL LAH, MARJAN OSOLNIK, AND SLOVENIAN DIRECTOR
OF THE KRSKO PROJECT DULAR AS WELL AS WESTINGHOUSE VICE PRESIDENT
WEAVER. THE LUNCH WAS EXTREMELY WARM AND CORDIAL. IT
EMERGED THAT BLATNIK HAD DELIVERED A SPEECH AT THE LJUBLJANA
LIBERATION RALLY IN MAY 1945. NONE OF THE SLOVENIAN OFFICIALS
HAD BEEN AWARE OF THIS BEFORE. MARINC SEEMED ESPECIALLY
IMPRESSED; HE MENTIONED THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT A RUSSIAN HAD
ADDRESSED THAT RALLY, BUT HAD NEVER BEFORE HEARD THAT AN AMERICAN
HAD ALSO SPOKEN. THERE WAS AN INFORMAL DINNER FOR
BLATNIK IN THE EVENING, HOSTED BY THE LEADERS
OF THE VETERAN'S ASSOCIATION.
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